

# ANCAP vehicle safety ratings

at point of sale



For the better

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On average, three people are killed and 90 are seriously injured every day on Australia's roads - that's 35,000 adults and children every year.<sup>1</sup> Almost everyone has, at some stage, been affected by a road crash. Vehicle safety plays an enormous role in helping to avoid or reduce the severity of crashes.



When it comes to vehicle safety, not all cars are equal. For example, occupants have twice the chance of being killed or seriously injured in a vehicle rated 1 star by the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) compared to a vehicle rated 5 stars.<sup>2</sup> Purchasing a 5-star car could literally save your life.

## Western Australia's road safety challenge

In 2013, Western Australia's road fatality rate was still higher than the national rate. On average, Western Australia recorded one fatality almost every two days. Historically, Western Australia has been one of the worst performing states.

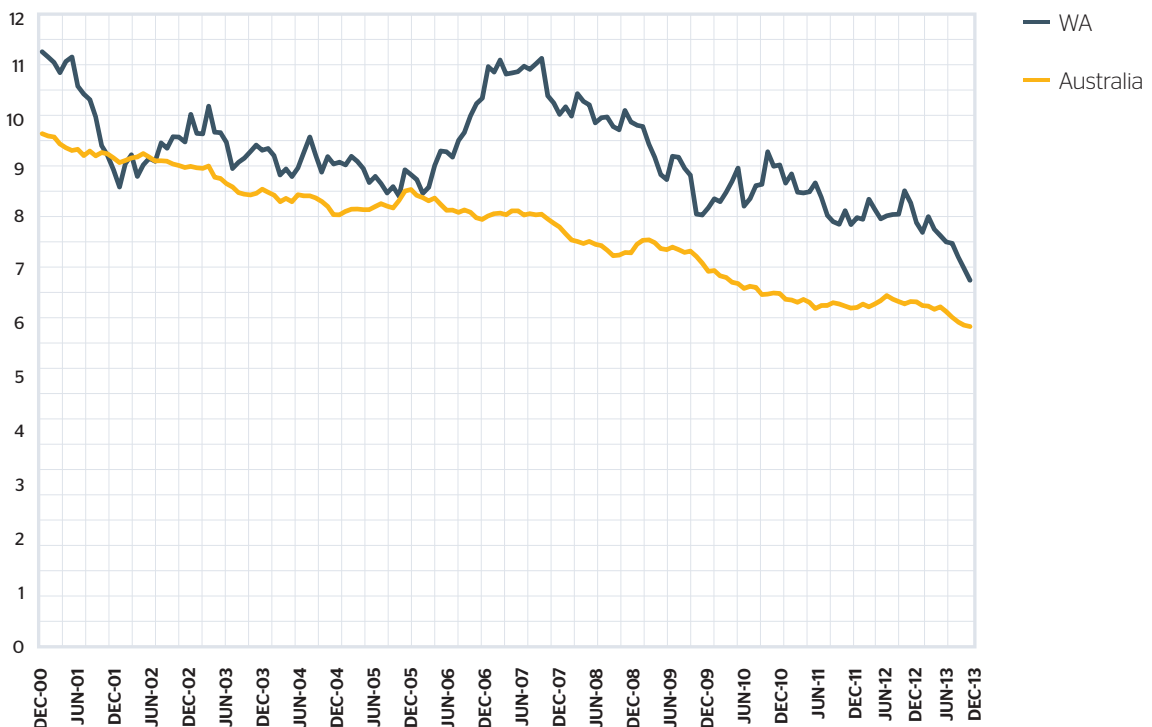
Based on 2013 figures, for WA to come into line with the national rate, 33 additional lives would need to be saved each year.

In particular, regional road safety remains an alarming concern, with 45 per cent of the state's deaths occurring on country roads despite only about 22 per cent of the population living outside of the metropolitan area.

## Safer vehicles are part of the safe system

Along with Safe Road Use, Safe Roads and Roadsides and Safe Speeds, Safer Vehicles are one of the four cornerstones of the Safe Systems approach to road safety. Safe Systems is the foundation of Towards Zero, WA's Road Safety Strategy.

Figure 1 » Fatalities per 100,000 persons



<sup>1</sup>Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (Australian Infrastructure Statistics - Yearbook 2012)  
<sup>2</sup>Australasian New Car Assessment Program

Towards Zero, which has been adopted by successive WA State Governments, and to which the RAC is a signatory, commits to:

- › Promoting safety features that reduce the likelihood of a crash and reduce the impact of the crash on vehicle occupants as well as pedestrians and cyclists;
- › Encouraging consumers and businesses to purchase safer vehicles; and
- › Implementing mandatory safe vehicle procurement in Government fleets and recommending additional safety features to be considered.

The uptake of safer vehicles and key safety features is improving due to a range of measures, such as the mandating of electronic stability control (ESC) for passenger cars and plans to mandate ESC in light commercial vehicles. However, more can be done to ensure crash protection and other safety features are a part of every new car design.

**Figure 2 » ‘The Safe System’<sup>3</sup>**



**Knowing the safety rating of your next vehicle could save your life**

ANCAP provides consumers with transparent advice on vehicle safety through independent testing and analysis. ANCAP currently publishes star safety ratings for more than 420 vehicles online. However, safety ratings are not always visible on cars at the point of sale, and as such, consumers do not have easy access to vital safety information when purchasing their new car.

Consumer goods such as refrigerators and washing machines are already required to display energy consumption labels at the point of sale. Even cars are legally required to display fuel consumption and emissions information at the point of sale.

This information could help you choose a more environmentally friendly appliance or car, yet there is no mandatory requirement for vehicle safety ratings to be displayed on new cars at the point of sale – information which might one day save your life.

New vehicle purchasing decisions impact not just the lives of those consumers and their loved ones but also the lives of those associated with the car throughout its working life on the road, which in Australia is about 10 years on average.

ANCAP is supported by the Australian Government, all Australian State and Territory governments, the Australian and New Zealand motoring clubs, the Victorian Transport Accident Commission and the FIA Foundation.

**The difference 5 stars makes**

ANCAP star safety ratings are determined based on a series of internationally recognised crash tests and provide independent and transparent advice on the level of occupant protection provided by vehicles in serious front and side crashes. ANCAP safety ratings also take into account how well vehicles help drivers avoid crashes through the use of driver assistance technologies.

In a frontal crash at 64km/h, the choice of an ANCAP 2-star rated vehicle will almost certainly mean the driver pays the infinitely higher price of life-threatening serious chest, leg and foot injuries. In an identical crash in an equivalent 5-star vehicle, the driver’s injuries would be unlikely to be life threatening.<sup>2</sup>

To achieve an ANCAP 5-star rating, a vehicle must achieve the highest internationally recognised standards in all test categories. In 2014, a new 5-star rated vehicle will be equipped with front and rear side airbags, electronic stability control and at least four other safety assistance technologies such as adaptive cruise control, blind spot monitoring and autonomous emergency braking.

In future years, the criteria for a 5-star ANCAP safety rating will become increasingly more stringent as demand from consumers continues to drive vehicle manufacturers to make safety improvements.

To demonstrate our commitment to vehicle safety, the RAC will not insure or finance any 2012 and beyond manufactured vehicles which have been rated by ANCAP and don’t achieve safety ratings of 4 or 5 stars.

<sup>3</sup>Towards Zero 2009

## Car safety myths

### 1. New is always safer

Not all new cars are safe. Some car makers are taking advantage of the significant gap between the level of safety stipulated by the Australian Design Rules (approximately 2 stars), and the safety credentials required by ANCAP for a vehicle to receive 5 stars. These vehicles are typically cheaper than their competition in the new car market, but have considerably poorer safety credentials.

**ANCAP star ratings on new cars at the point of sale will clearly show how some new cars are safer than others.**

### 2. Bigger is always safer

While mass will always play its part where two vehicles with widely differing masses are involved in a collision, there are still a number of large vehicles which have very poor safety credentials. These are related to how well the vehicles protect their occupants in a crash, and how well they help drivers avoid crashes. A large vehicle is by no means a guarantee of optimum safety. Safety is related to how the vehicle will actually protect the passenger upon impact – not solely the size of the vehicle.

**ANCAP star ratings on new cars at the point of sale will clearly show how bigger is not always safer.**

### 3. Safe cars are expensive

New cars with 5-star ANCAP ratings are priced from \$13,000 drive away. The Australian vehicle market is among the most diverse and competitive in the world, meaning there is a wide choice of safe and affordable new cars. The RAC has compiled a list of approximately 100 popular new cars with 5-star ANCAP safety ratings to show that you don't have to pay a high price to avoid paying the ultimate price.

**ANCAP star ratings on new cars at the point of sale will clearly show that 5-star safety is affordable.**

## The way forward

Merit exists in progressing, with some urgency, the introduction of mandatory display of ANCAP star ratings at the point of sale.

A high level of compliance could be expected among vehicle dealers given the high number of passenger vehicles which already have 4-star and 5-star ANCAP safety ratings.

According to analysis by ANCAP, 83 per cent of passenger cars (including SUVs) sold in Australia in 2013 had 5-star ANCAP safety ratings. However, only one third of light commercial vehicles, such as vans and twin-cab utes, had 5 stars.

Consequently, a two-stage approach to implementation is proposed. In the first instance, the mandatory display of vehicle safety ratings should apply to passenger vehicles, with a secondary rollout of the mandate for light commercial vehicles to follow.

A 2011 survey of RAC members showed that 76 per cent supported the display of safety rating stickers on new and used vehicles.

Light commercial vehicles are the workplaces of thousands of Australians, and are also widely used as family vehicles. There is an opportunity for the second stage of the rollout to align with the mandating of electronic stability control in light commercial vehicles, which is scheduled to commence in November 2015.

The mandatory display of ANCAP vehicle safety ratings at the point of sale, whilst giving due recognition to those manufacturers who have already responded to market demand for vehicle safety features, will encourage other vehicle manufacturers to make their cars safer, ultimately helping to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on Australia's roads.

## About the RAC

The RAC is the leading advocate of the mobility issues and challenges facing WA and is committed to ensuring safe, accessible and sustainable mobility options for our members and the broader community. For more information on ANCAP visit [www.ancap.com.au/home](http://www.ancap.com.au/home)

